about the project

Deteriorating housing, inadequate access to health care, poor schools, high unemployment, crime, and poverty create a network of conditions that may lead to negative impacts on the well-being of communities. This pattern is especially severe for low income and minority neighborhoods, with significant health implications for both adults and children.

Elements of the built environment can influence health through direct exposure and indirectly by creating social stress and influencing patterns of risky behaviors. The built environment includes:

- residential and commercial buildings
- roads, sidewalks, and empty lots
- churches, schools, community centers, and parks

The Children's Environmental Health Initiative (CEHI) seeks to understand the relationship between the built environment and public health and work with stakeholders to identify ways to improve Durham's built environment.

Motivated by increasing evidence regarding the relationship between public health and the built environment, the Community Assessment Project was conceived with two key goals:

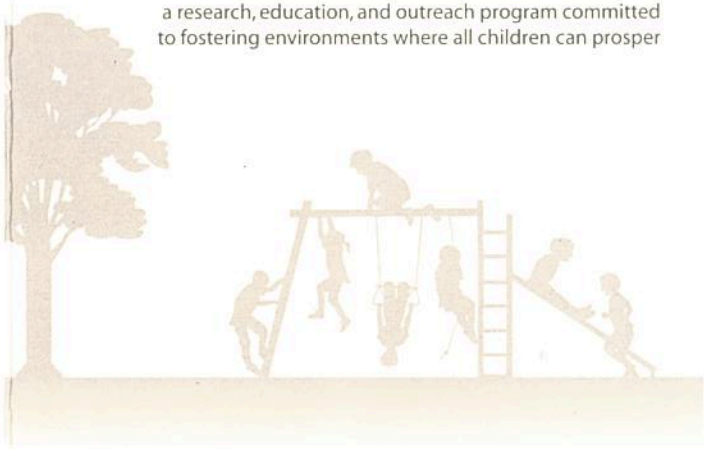
- Provide community residents with maps of the built environment to support residents' efforts to improve quality of life; and
- Elucidate the relationship between the built environment and health.

Children's Environmental Health Initiative
Nicholas School of the Environment
Duke University
Box 90328
Durham, NC 27708-0328

CEHI

Children's Environmental Health Initiative

a research, education, and outreach program committed to fostering environments where all children can prosper



Nicholas School of the Environment
Duke University




The Community Assessment Project

Durham, NC

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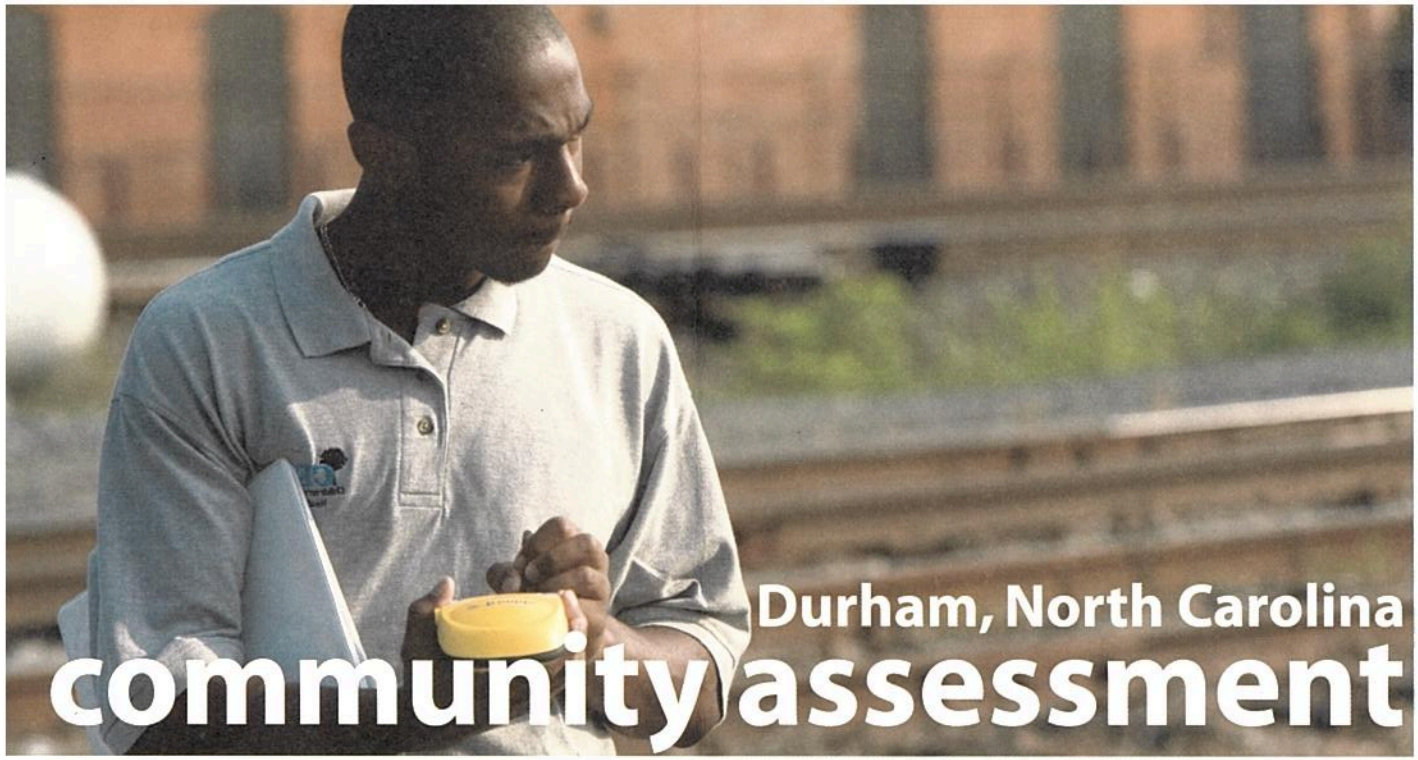
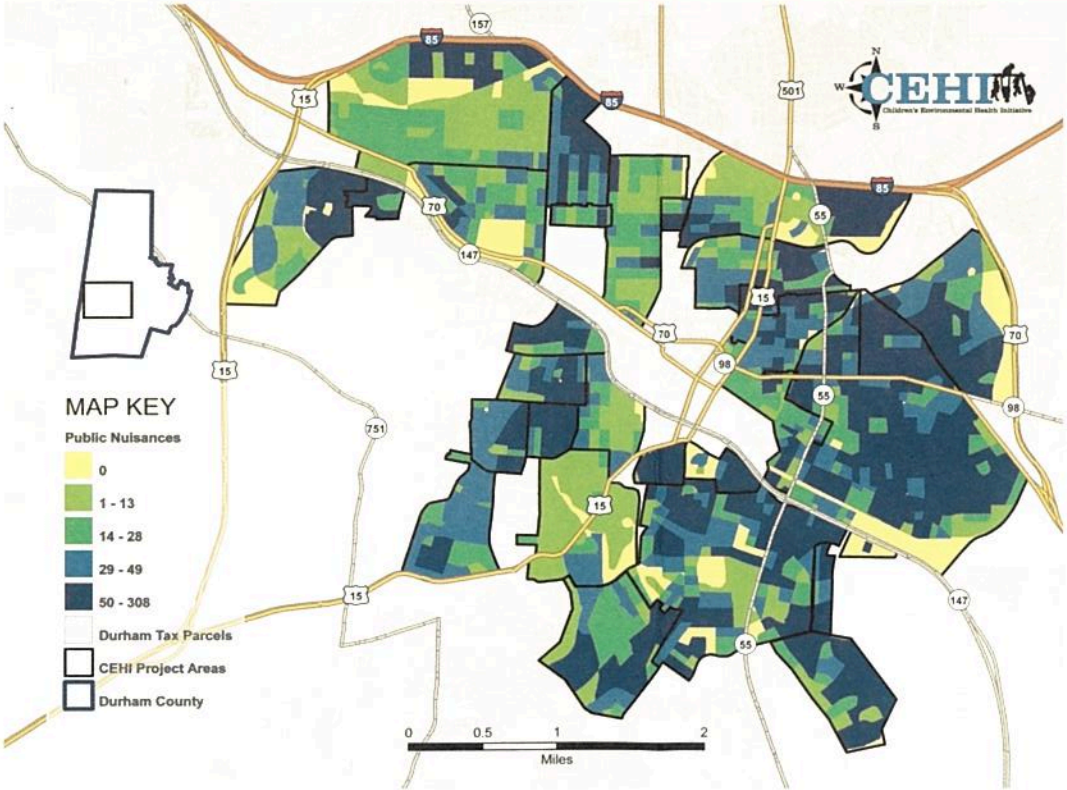


Durham, North Carolina
community assessment

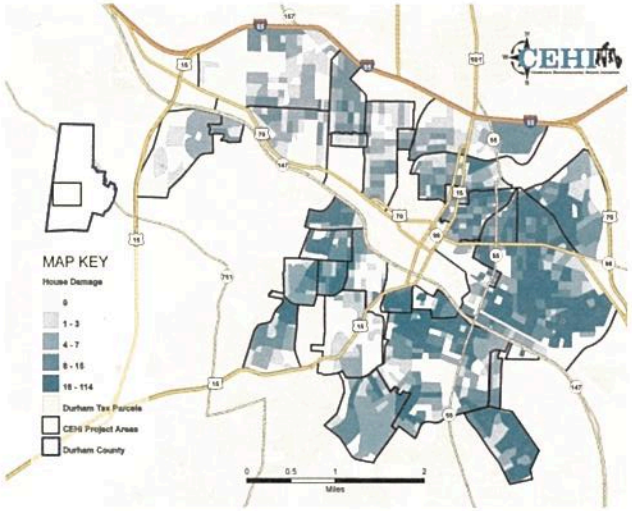


Six key themes shape the project:

- Housing characteristics
- Neighborhood conditions
- Community resources
- Food access
- Neighborhood safety
- Demographics

about the data and maps

From May to August 2008, CEHI data collectors canvassed on foot over 17,000 tax parcels in Durham using a standardized visual assessment of building exteriors. Sidewalks and nuisance variables like graffiti or litter were recorded, as were the presence of community assets, such as religious institutions, parks, and community centers. Assessments were conducted using handheld computers equipped with global positioning system (GPS) technology.



The map above shows the total number of observable structural damages in each Census block. Such observations include broken windows, peeling paint, boarded doors, as well as other obvious damage. Darker colored blocks have higher concentrations of observed housing damage.

The map to the left shows the total observations of public nuisances in each Census block. Some examples of observable public nuisances include graffiti, discarded shopping carts, broken glass, excess litter, and cigarette or alcohol containers. Darker colored blocks have higher concentrations of observed public nuisances.

learn more

Visit the *Projects* page at: *www.nicholas.duke.edu/cehi* for a detailed report of the Community Assessment Project, including both pre-formatted and interactive maps. Feel free to call or email CEHI at 919-613-8708 or *cehi@env.duke.edu* if you are interested in learning more about the Community Assessment Project.